

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 06007 100635 Z

15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 IO-12 INRE-00 DPW-01 AID-20

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 OMB-01 RSR-01 /141 W
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P 100400 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9900

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6007

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR III DAILY SITREP - 9 APRIL 1973

FOL TEL SENT SAIGON FROM BIEN HOA DATED APR 9, 1973 RPTD FOR YOUR
INFO:

QUOTE BIEN HOA 61

1. DURING THE 24- HOURS PERIOD ENDING AT 1000 APRIL 9, VC/ NVA
MILITARY ACTIVITY WAS AT A MODERATE LEVEL, ABOUT THE SAME AS
LAST WEEK. THERE WERE 22 INCIDENTS REPORTED, CONSISTING OF
18 ATTACKS BY FIRE (ABF), SIX OF WHICH WERE MORE THAN 20
ROUNDS, AND FOUR GROUND CONTACTS. TON LE CHAM BASE CAMP IN
TAY NINH PROVINCE REMAINED UNDER SIEGE AND TOOK OVER 200 ROUNDS OF
MIXED ORDNANCE, WHICH WOUNDED ONE RANGER. NO GROUND ATTACKS
WERE REPORTED BUT AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY OF B-40 GRENADES WERE
FIRED INTO THE CAMP AT CLOSE RIFLE RANGE. THE VC/ NVA ATTACK
ALONG HIGHWAY 1 A IN PHUOC LONG PROVINCE SLACKENED, POSSIBLY
AS A RESULT OF ARTILLERY AND AIR STRIKES PUT IN FOUR DAYS AGO.
THE VC/ NVA ARE THOUGHT TO BE RESUPPLYING. THERE WERE THREE
ABF, INTO LONG DIEN RANGER CAMP, ONE OF 30 MORTAR ROUNDS WHICH
CAUSED NO CASUALTIES. THE MR III G2 BELIEVES ONLY ONE BATTALION
OF THE NVA 272 ND REGIMENT, NVA 9 TH DIVISION, AND A VC LOCAL
FORCE BATTALION, THE 368 TH, TRADITIONALLY A GOOD ONE, ARE
KEPPING UP PRESSURE IN PHUOC BINH DISTRICT, AND THAT THEIR
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PAGE 02 SAIGON 06007 100635 Z

COMBINED FORCE IS INSUFFICIENT TO OVERRUN PHUOC BINH CITY/ SONG BE. IN HAU NGHIA PROVINCE, THE VC/ NVA FIRED 40 ROUNDS OF 82 MM MORTAR INTO CU CHI DISTRICT COMPOUND KILLING TWO ARVN AND WOUNDING 18, INCLUDING FIVE CIVILIANS. TWO ARVN TRUCKS WERE DAMAGED AND THREE HOUSES DESTROYED. FOUR OTHER ABF IN HAU NGHIA PROVINCE CAUSED NO CASUALTIES. ONE CHIL WAS KILLED AND SEVEN WOUNDED WHEN ENEMY MINES WERE DETONATED IN THE TRANG BANG DISTRICT STICER STADIUM. VC/ NVA ACTIVITY ALONG HIGHWAY 2 IN THE DUC THANH AREA OF PHUOC TUY PROVINCE STEPPED UP. THE 372 ND RF BATTALION LOCATED FIVE KM NORTH OF DUC THANH RECEIVED 19 ABF FROM 1000 SATURDAY TO 1000 MONDAY, TOTALING OVER 250 ROUNDS OF MORTAR THAT WOUNDED THREE RF. IN ADDITION, DUC THANH DISTRICT COMPOUND RECEIVED 100 ROUNDS OF MORTAR DURING EARLY MORNING 9 APRIL THAT CAUSED NO CASUALTIES. THREE GROUND ATTACKS ON THE 372 ND RF BATTALION WERE DRIVEN OFF, WITH SIX RF KIA AND SEVEN WOUNDED WHILE VC/ NVA CASUALTIES WERE UNKNOWN. TEN VNAF TACAIR STRIKES WERE FLOWN AGAINST VC/ NVA POSTIONS WITH UNKNOWN RESULTS EXCEPT FOR ONE SECONDARY EXPLOSION. IN TWO SEPARATE GROUND ATTACKS IN KHIEH HANH DISTRICT, TAY NINH PROVINCE, AGAINST PF PLATOONS CONDUCTING SECURITY OPERATIONS, THE VC/ NVA LOST FOUR KILLED WHILE TWO PF WERE WOUNDED. ELSEWHERE IN MR III THERE WERE LIGHT HARASSING ABF REPORTED IN LONG KHANH PROVINCE. TWO 107 MM ROCKETS FIRED INTO THE LONG GIAO RF TRAINING BASE KILLED TWO AND WOUNDED TWO TRAINEES.

2. MR III HEADQUARTERS CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT ENEMY ACTIVITY IN THE REGION IS NOT INDICATIVE OF A FORTHCOMING GENERAL OFFENSIVE, BUT IS RATHER PART OF A STRATEGY OF APPLYING ENOUGH MILITARY PRESSURE TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL GAINS IN THE PARIS NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES TO THE CEASE- FIRE AGREEMENT. IN ADDITION, THE PRESSURE COMPELS ARVN TO DEPLOY DEFENSIVELY IN ORDER TO PROTECT POPULATION CENTERS AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION, AND RENDERS IT UNABLE TO INTERDICT PRG PROGRAMS

TO ORGANIZE POLITICALLY AND RESETTLE PEOPLE IN THE UNPOPULATED BUT LARGE AREA OF MR III NORTH OF THE LINE THAT STRETCHES FROM TAY NINH CITY TO TRI TAM TO PHU GIAO TO SONG BE, WHICH THEY CONTROL.

3. INITIAL CANADIAN REACTION TO THE DOWNING OF THE ICCS HELICOPTER IN MR I IS THAT, TRAGIC THOUGH IT WAS, IT JUST MIGHT PROD THE PRG TO PARTICIPATE MORE SO THAT THIS SORT OF THING WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN. (COMMENT: WE DID NOT ASK OUR SOURCE WHETHER THE DOWNING
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PAGE 03 SAIGON 06007 100635 Z

WOULD PUT A DAMPER ON THE PRESENTLY MORE AGGRESSIVE EFFORTS OF THE CANADIANS TO CONDUCT INVESTIGATIONS (SEE OUR APRIL 4 SITREP). IT MAY HAVE THAT EFFECT.)

4. THE POLISH DELEGATION TO THE BEN CAT SUB- REGIONAL ICIA TEAM MOVED BACK INTO THE LAM SON COMPOUND ON APRIL 6, BRINGING THAT TEAM BACK UP TO A FULL COMPLEMENT.

5. INITIAL REACTIONS TO THE US- RVN JOINT COMMUNIQUE FROM CIVILIAN AND MILITARY VIETNAMESE LEADERS IN TAY NINH, BINH DU, AND PHUOC TUY PROVINCES ARE GENERALLY QUITE POSITIVE. MOST PEOPLE ARE REASSURED BY THE US COMMITMENT OF CONTINUING MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO THE RVN, AND BY THE STATEMENT THAT ACTIONS THAT WOULD THREATEN THE BASIS OF THE AGREEMENT WOULD CALL FOR APPROPRIATE VIGOROUS REACTIONS. THE FEW CRITICISMS EXPRESSED WERE DIRECTED AT THE VAGUE WORDING USED TO DESCRIBE THE POSSIBLE US REACTION IF THE NORTH ATTACKED SOUTH VIET- NAM AGAIN.

6. OVER THE WEEKEND, THE GRVN CONDUCTED TWO MORE WELL- ORGANIZED, WELL- RUN DEMONSTRATIONS IN FRONT OF ICCS COMPOUNDS, PROTESTING ALLEGED COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF THE CEASE- FIRE AT TON LE CHAM.

ON SATURDAY, A CROWD OF ABOUT 100 PEOPLE FROM GO VAP DISTRICT OF GIA DINH PROVINCE WERE TRUCKED TO THE ICCS COMPOUND IN CHOLON, DEMONSTRATED PEACEFULLY, AND WATCHED AS GIA DINH PROVINCE COUNCILMAN DUC (WHO IS FROM GO VAP) PRESENTED A PETITION TO THE ICCS CHAIRMAN, AN INDONESIAN WHO REPLIED TO THE CROWD THROUGH AN INTERPRETER THAT THE ICCS WAS TRYING TO INITIATE AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FIGHTING AT TON LE CHAM. DUC SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE A " BIGGER AND BETTER DEMONSTRATION" IN A DAY OR TWO. ON SUNDAY, A CROWD OF ABOUT 15,000 (CANADIAN AND VIETNAMESE ESTIMATE) DEMONSTRATED PEACEFULLY IN FRONT OF THE ICCS COMPOUND IN VUNG TAU. THE DEMONSTRATION WAS ORGANIZED AND RUN BY THE MAYOR, WHO PRESENTED A THREE- PAGE LETTER TO THE UPCS. BANNERS WERE PROMINENT, AND THERE WAS VIETNAMESE PRESS AND TV COVERAGE. WALKINSHAW UNQUOTE WHITEHOUSE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SAIGON06007
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730438/aaaahzfe.tel
Line Count: 158
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Aug-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <28-Nov-2001 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971215
Subject: MR III DAILY SITREP - 9 APRIL 1973 FOL TEL SENT SAIGON FROM BIEN HOA DATED APR 9, 1973 RPTD FOR YOUR INFO: QUOTE BIEN HOA 61
TAGS: MILI, PINS, VS, MILI, PINT
To: EA
JEC PARIS
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005